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DIVISION OF
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

January 31, 1994

Mr. David H. Hull
Water Quality Compliance Officer
Idaho Division of Environmental Quality
224 South Arthur
Pocatello, Idaho 83204

RE: Heat-transfer oil spill 12/10/93

Dear Mr. Hull,

This letter is to update your files on the heat-transfer oil spill which occurred at our facility 12/10/93. The spill was reported to Mr. Gordon Brown of your office on 12/20/93. The delay in reporting was caused by miscommunication of information contained in the MSDS for the spilled material. The spill was also reported to the National Response Center and the Idaho COM Center.

The material spilled was Therminol 55, a non-PCB heat-transfer oil produced by Monsanto Co. The spill was caused by a catastrophic pump failure (the side of the pump blew out) in one of our SPA evaporator units. An estimated 432 gallons of the oil spilled from the pump onto the ground beneath the unit and flowed into a process water ditch. The spilled material was then contained in the process water ponds, which are a closed-loop system. The Therminol 55 oil remaining in the evaporator unit was drained to an empty rail car.

Clean-up of the pond system was performed using oil-absorbent booms and pads, along with a skimming device to collect the major portion of the spilled oil. The oil-soaked booms and pads were placed in 55-gallon drums. The skimmed oil was pumped into a MC-312 pup trailer and later transferred to the rail car containing the oil drained from the evaporator unit.

The contaminated soil from beneath the evaporator unit was removed and also placed in 55-gallon drums.

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A sample from the rail car containing the combined oil was sent to a national laboratory for analysis. The analysis showed that the oil is considered a "used oil" by EPA's definition at 40CFR260.10; was "on-spec" to the specifications in Table 1, 40CFR279.11; and could be burned for energy recovery according to 40CFR279 Subpart G. The rail car was subsequently off-loaded to a waste oil transporter and shipped to an approved waste oil burner.

Samples of the absorbent materials used in the clean-up, along with the contaminated soil have been sent to USPCI Grassy Mountain Facility in Utah for waste profile. These materials will be landfilled there when the profiling is complete.

The operators and supervisors involved in this clean-up project worked diligently to correct the problem. Their efforts and ingenuity minimized possible contamination to the surrounding environment. The spill was contained and the remediation effort was performed in a timely and professional manner.

If you need additional information please feel free to call me at (208) 547-4381.

Sincerely,
NU-WEST INDUSTRIES, INC.


Monty Johnson
Environmental Manager